

WISCONSIN WORKS (W-2) CONTRACT AND IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

201 E. Washington Avenue, GEF 1, Room D203
Madison, WI

Friday, June 22, 2001

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

MINUTES

The W-2 Contract and Implementation Committee is the single point of contact for feedback to the Department of Workforce Development on policy implementation related to W-2 agencies, and includes representation from the Wisconsin County Human Service Association (WCHSA), Urban Caucus counties, W-2 private agencies in Milwaukee County and the balance of state, and Tribal W-2 agencies.

COMMITTEE:

Members (Present = X)

X Eric Baker DES/AO
William B. Adams Racine County
Jon Angeli Southwest Consortium
X Phyllis A. Bermingham Marathon County
X Mona Garland OIC
X Tina Koehn UMOS
X James Nitz Kaiser Group
Laverne Plucinski Bad River Chippewa
X Jewel Reichert Fond du Lac County
X Adelene Robinson Kenosha County
X Shirley Ross La Crosse County
Liz Green Dane County
X Jerry Stepaniak MAXIMUS
Julia Taylor YW Works
X Glynis Underwood ESI
Michael Van Dyke Door County

Alternates (Present = X)

Jan Alft Marathon County
Linda Brandenburg ESI
X Cheryl Cobb UMOS
X Doris Green OIC
X Deb Hughes Southwest Consortium
Edward Kamin III Kenosha County
Richard L. Kammerud Polk County
X James Krivsky Racine County
X Barbara Metoxen Oneida Nation
Tom Miller La Crosse County
X Teresa Pierce Workforce Connections, Inc.
Rita Renner YW Works
Chris Schmitz Fond du Lac County
Sara Shackleton Dane County

State Staff

Attendees:

Janice Tripp, BDS
Gerry Mayhew, BDS
Jude Morse, BDS
Shawn Smith, AO
Ceri Jenkins, BWCA
Ron Blasco, BWI
Dianne Reynolds, BWCA
Erin Fath, DOA
Alan Sweet, BWCA

Lynn Schmitt, BDS
Joseph Stafford, DWS
Tim Hineline, BWI
Mary Rowin, AO
Rena Beyer, BWCA
Ginevra Ewers, BDS
Lee Mutchler, DWD
Rena Beyer, BWCA

Guests:

Dick Buschmann, MCDHS
Jane Batha, Curtis and Assoc.
John Wilberding, Maximus
Kevin Loef, Kenosha County
Cindy Sutter, RCHSD
Judy Steinbicar, RCHSD
Keith Garland, YW Works
Pamela Fendt, UWM-Center on Economic Dev.
Shirley Kitchen, Dodge County
Kaye Krenske, ESI
Carol Medaris, WCCF
Neil Naftzger, YW Works
Jane Ahlstrom, AFSCME Council
Marilyn Putz, Walworth Co., Kaiser Group
Maureen Shea, Dane County
Jane Ahlstrom, AFSCME Council 11

Recorder:

Jayne Wanless, W-2 Contract & Implementation Committee Coordinator

Welcome

Eric Baker addressed the C&I members on the existence of bylaws and membership guidelines for the committee. Mr. Baker wishes to have the length of membership, role of the committee members, and decisions process put in writing, not to limit open dialog or put restrictions on the committee, but as a reference. Ginevra Ewers asked for a volunteer to assist her in writing up bylaws. Deb Hughes agreed to assist in putting something in writing and present it to the committee at the next meeting. Mr. Baker questioned whether non-members are able to bring issues to the table, provide input and make comments or if just members participate. The members prefer an open dialog including participation from guests. Mr. Baker agreed and announced that participation will not be limited to members.

Minutes Approval

Ms. Underwood was not at the last meeting; she wants the minutes to reflect her absence. A motion was made by Jim Krivsky to approve the modified May minutes and seconded by Shirley Ross. Motion carried.

Issue/Discussion: Monthly Time Limits Update

A handout of the current caseload's extension status was distributed. Dianne Reynolds commented that Margaret McMahon is addressing CARES issues with the 24 and the 60-month extensions. Shirley Ross requested that information on how the JOBS Clock counts for federal and State TANF, be provided at the meeting in July.

Issue/Discussion: Monthly CARES Update Report, Tim Hineline, BWI

On July 15th the Security Package implementation is scheduled from 5am-8am. A local agency staff member volunteered to assist with the implementation during the early morning hours. A freeze on the security system is planned for the July 18th through 21st; during this time no requests for adding, deleting or updating security information. All requests during this time will be processed after the 21st. Passwords can be changed during the time of the freeze. On July 29th RAC F will move in permanently, try to limit security changes during the week of July 30th. Any problems contact the help desk.

Issue/Discussion: Monthly Training Update Report Gerry Mayhew, BDS/Training Section

Redesigned New worker class started on June 19th. Training staff called participants for feedback on registration and self-study materials. The participants thought the process went well and information provided in the self-study material was helpful.

The training staff is currently updating web material. In the future the updates will happen quarterly. Materials will include monitoring for Welfare to Work and Children First. The web materials are helpful to both new and experienced staff.

The training unit plans on adding 7 new topical workshops to Enhanced Case Management choices. Some of these topics include:

- Budgeting Food Stamps and Medical Assistance for workers non-W-2 staff
- Food Stamp Payment Accuracy
- Compassion Fatigue
- Housing Issues

Contact Ms. Mayhew with comments or suggestions regarding training.

Issue/Discussion: Biennial Budget Update, Shawn Smith, AO

Ms. Smith provided a handout summarizing the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) recent action. Ms. Pierce questioned whether JFC understands the implications of removing Community Reinvestment (CR) carryover. Mr. Nitz inquired whether such action is legal and if legal counsel has been consulted. Ms. Smith spoke with legal counsel and his stance is that this decision is unconstitutional. Mr. Nitz stated that if anything can change retroactively in a contract, it's very threatening to anyone considering a State contract. Committee members requested copies of the legal counsel's opinion on this matter.

Ms. Hughes questioned the impact the JFC decisions will have on the State. The Assembly Republican Caucus still needs to meet and add input to the budget bill. Ms. Smith is not sure of the Republican's priorities. Mr. Baker added to sustain the current Child Care Program, funding would have to be taken from other programs. DWD staff devoted time to inform JFC regarding contract issues, CR funding and Workforce Attachment and Advancement and other issues affecting the Department. The success depends on many variables including history of funding use, future of the W-2 program and the need for funding for other programs.

Ms. Bermingham reported that if her agency continues with its current case load it will run out of benefits within the first year of the contract and wonders whether the Department plans to address this topic during the mini-budget session

during the middle of the biennium. Ms. Bermingham's W-2 contract includes 45 cash payments and currently the agency has 75-80 cash cases. Mr. Baker responded that the mini session would not address such an issue and reminded the group that the budget process is not over yet. The Governor's office has interest in the conference committee.

Ms. Pierce remarked if the program runs at a deficit, she would like to see an easier process to obtain contingency funds. Ms. Smith responded that any contingency funds are targeted for Kinship Care, W-2 and child care. Ms. Pierce expressed her hope that the top priority for TANF funds is W-2 contracts.

In the handout under W-2 Contracts it states, "Decrease the performance bonuses available under the current contract by \$1.95 million in 01-02 to reflect the amount agencies are likely to receive as bonuses base on experience to date under the current contract." Mr. Nitz pointed out performance criteria ties money to individual and has a clause that stops you from dispersing additional funds.

Ms. Bermingham noted that the Senate Democratic changes to the budget include \$200,000 to Technical Colleges to provide work readiness training and on the job training. W-2 agencies are already doing this and she questions the Legislators' understanding of services and the impact they have at the local level.

Ms. Hughes questioned whether the large start up costs for a new W-2 agency has been presented to the Legislature, if a current W-2 agency chooses not to re-contract. Mr. Baker stated this has been addressed. The perception is agencies had a lot of money in the past, now other areas need more funding, may need to find other ways to meet customers' needs. Ms. Pierce stated that working with less funding and resources an agency cannot be held to the same standards, such as caseload limits, failure to serve and customer satisfaction.

Ms. Smith summarized areas of concern to the committee:

- Provide Legal Counsel's written response to Community Reinvestment
- \$200,000 to Technical Colleges
- Underfunding of benefits
- Address expectations without increased funding
- Lack of flexibility between benefits and services
- Bonuses and staff salaries
- Legality of the Performance Bonus

Mr. Nitz pointed out the impact of reducing contract dollars for Job Centers and is interested in the Governor's view for the future. The committee agreed that bonuses and salaries are not the top priority.

The Department's next steps are to address the Republican Caucus and the Conference Committee. The tight budget may call for creative strategies with the programs and to look at things realistically and remember that the budget is not finalized and may change again.

Issue/Discussion: TANF Reauthorization Update Shawn Smith, AO

Ms. Smith handed out a list of TANF Reauthorization web sites. Ms. Smith recommended the Welfare Information Network site: <http://www.welfareinfo.org>.

Mr. Buschmann questions the percent of the country spending all their TANF dollars. The Government Accounting Office shows \$300,000,000 has not been spent. Most is obligated in contracts. Welplan estimates the Midwest states are all out of funding.

Ms. Bermingham commented that at a WIA finance meeting a State staff person said the TANF money would be distributed to the Workforce Development Boards similar to WIA and WtW. Mr. Baker responded that he has never said this. Ms. Pierce added the perception around the State is similar to the comment Ms. Bermingham presented. Mr. Baker stated that the intention of DWS is to review the present delivery system for all work programs. In the future any review would involve partners and customers.

Issue/ Discussion: Child Care Update, Alan Sweet, OCC

Mr. Sweet, from the Office of Child Care, updated the members on changes in the child care payment system which will be fully implemented by the end of the year. The changes were decided upon with collaborative meetings with counties and local advisory group. The new payment system models the private market, captures more details and accurate provider prices. This allows the providers to be paid closer to private cost and reduces spending. The current method has 2 different prices based on age (up to age 2 and 2-12) the new survey will have 4 pay ranges (up to age 2, age 2, age 3-5 and age 6 and above). CARES screens will be revised to include the additional age ranges. The additional age ranges

will limit the occurrences of overpayment to providers. A provider that does not participate in the survey cannot participate in the program. The new survey will no longer have the provider predict future pricing but reflect the price as of the date the survey is completed. A weekly ceiling for certified providers will be in place. Certified providers can currently getting be paid more than licensed providers, this will no longer be the case, and this change goes into effect in August. The new rates take effect January 1, 2002.

The providers will be notified of the changes through a stuffer sent out in the check prior to the implementation of the new changes in payments. The changes will also be outlined on the survey. The committee requested that a copy of the stuffer go out in the Operations Memo so agencies will know what is on the stuffer when providers call. The committee also has concerns about non-English speaking providers and whether the stuffer will be in different language. Mr. Sweet said they would add a line available in languages other than English to contact the W-2 agency about the changes.

Issue/Discussion: Satisfaction Survey Ron Blascoe, BWI

Most of the committees concerns will be addressed during the pre-test of the survey. Mr. Blascoe presented a timeline including the pre-test, actual survey and results. The first wave of surveys will be in March with a report in late May. The final report will be completed in October.

Ms. Ross pointed out that a rolling survey would not reflect technical training or improvement from the initial results. Mr. Blascoe is hoping to have committee input on the reports. Currently looking at accumulative or back at least six-months. Participants will be surveyed at most once every 6 months.

At the end of this year the State will run a pilot test of the questions with a weighted sample to capture different situations and address any problems. The funding for this project is from an appropriation for a Welfare Study from administration TANF dollars (around \$100,000 over a couple of years). The vendor that Mr. Blascoe hopes to use is a non-profit survey group through the University Wisconsin through a Memorandum of Understanding.

Issue/Discussion: Limited English Proficiency Issues Phyllis Bermingham, Marathon County

Ms. Bermingham asked about the current status of implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Health and Family Services and the Department of Workforce Development for assessing, county by county throughout the state, compliance by all entities receiving funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. She stated that there was an official announcement of this Memorandum of Understanding by Gladys Benavides, DHFS and a spokesperson from DWD at a conference in Madison in November 2000.

Since Ms. Benavides retired in March of 2001 and no further information has been given to the agencies, Ms. Bermingham questioned the two departments' plans.

Issue/Discussion: Next Contract Update Jude Morse, BDS

The review teams currently are reviewing the Right of First Selection Plans (RFS) for the 2002-2003 W-2 and Related Programs Contract. So far it appears that all Plans, with the possible exception of one, will be rated as acceptable as long as any required revisions to the Plan are completed. Some of the Plans had a few items missing or did not fully answer the response items. Each section of the RFS Plan will receive a rating and there also will be a rating for the overall Plan. The ratings are:

- Acceptable as is;
- Acceptable with revisions; or
- Unacceptable.

Regional office staff will work with RFS agencies that need to revise their Plans to obtain an acceptable rating. The results will be available by July 6th, 2001. The Notice of Intent to Contract will be issued to the RFS W-2 agencies.

On July 2nd the Request for Proposals (RFP) announcement for the competitive W-2 geographic areas will be issued, including Bayfield, Columbia, Jackson and Menominee Counties and two W-2 regions in Milwaukee. The RFP will be posted on the Department's website. Proposals in response to the RFP are due August 13th, 2001. Applications can form consortia to blend more than one geographic area in a Department region. Consortia will have no advantage with the rating of the Proposal but may have an operational advantage, including blending funding between the multiple geographic areas. The RFP process is confidential. If questions are asked, the answers are provided to everyone through the Department's website. Information on demographics for the competitive geographic areas (including caseload data, placement activities, FSET, WAA, WTW, Learnfare, education levels, race, ethnicity) will be provided to everyone as part of the RFP process. Ms. Morse stated any agency applying under the RFP must include detailed plans for the transition process. The agency must communicate with the Department to determine if any resources from the current W-2 agency are available to transition to the proposing agency if the proposing agency is awarded a W-2 Contract for 2002-2003.

Mr. Nitz questioned whether regions 4 and 5 in Milwaukee could be offered to Milwaukee County as proposed by the Joint Finance Committee. Mr. Baker said the Department is moving ahead with the RFP but it is not known yet if the law on the Milwaukee geographic areas will change. Mr. Nitz expressed concern about time and money put into writing a plan to the committee for the two W-2 regions in Milwaukee when statutory language could give the contract Milwaukee County. Ms. Rowin said the Department is looking into whether to delay issuing the RFP for these two areas.

Issue/Discussion: Reconciliation of Cash Benefit Cases in 2002-2003 Shirley Ross, LaCrosse County

Ms. Ross stated that current W-2 caseload number increased 4000 cases from January to April. Ms. Ross addressed concerns regarding contingency funds and proposed transferring money from agencies that are not spending funds, to supplement the funding of agencies that are running out of money. Ms. Ewers stated that current information keeps evolving and we need to think through options and look at it as a whole package and wait and see what happens with the budget. The committee wishes to keep this on the agenda for next month's meeting.

At last month's meeting we received feedback on the even percentage withheld from each agency's allocation to represent sanction amounts. Members of the committee expressed concern that this did not represent the actual amounts for sanctions. The committee preferred that the sanctions calculation be based on the actual amounts because of the large range between some Balance of State agencies and Milwaukee W-2 agencies. An alternative method to calculate each W-2 agency's share of the sanction deduction for the 2002-2003 W-2 Contract would be a percentage individualized for each agency based on the historical rate over time. Ms. Morse asked for volunteers from the committee for a workgroup to look at this idea. The volunteers are Jim Krivsky, Maryiln Putz, Doris Green and Tina Koehn. The committee requested a report on the workgroup at the next committee meeting.

Issue/Discussion: Best Practices: Meeting the Basic Educational Attainment Standard

Ms. Hughes reported that only 7 or 8 agencies met the Educational Attainment Standard. Kenosha County is one agency that is meeting the standard. Kevin Loef from Kenosha County shared his area writes realistic plans for example, if a participant reads at a 3rd grade level, a goal would be to read at a 6th grade level. He advised to look only at first obtainable goal, don't make everyone's goal to obtain a GED, think steps. Always close the activity with completion code "A". Ms. Schmitt complimented Kenosha County on good documentation entered into CARES to legitimize appropriate activity. Ms. Beyer suggested looking at other indicators besides grade level, usable daily skills such as learning to read a map, local literacy agencies can share different systems to use. Ms. Schmitt reminded the committee that Job Skills Training counts if entered a completion code of "A".

Issue/Discussion: OTHER –

Report to LAB Audits on Employee Bonuses

A request for volunteers from the agencies to put together a report regarding employee bonuses for the Legislative Audit Bureau. The volunteers are Jim Nitz, Marilyn Putz, Jane Batha, Tina Koehn's finance director and Adelene Robinson.

*****Change in Meeting Date and Place*****

NEXT MEETING DATE: **July 26, 2001**
 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
 30 W. Mifflin St.
 8th Floor Conference Room
 Madison, WI